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April 26.

Rev. H. LLOYD, D. D., V.P., in the Chair.

Mr. George Downes read a paper “On the Norse Geography of Ancient Ireland.” The earlier part consisted of remarks on an “Essay on the earliest Expeditions from the North to Ireland,” and on a small Map of Ireland accompanying it, as published in the Annals and Memoirs of the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries.

The author began by advertizing to the two provincial names on the map—*Úlastir* (Ulster), and *Kunnáktir* (Connaught),—and to two names of districts in Leinster—*Dyflinar-skíri*, or Dublinshire, and *Kunnjáttaborg* (a part of Meath). He argued that the local name in Johnstone’s edition of Lodbroc’s Death-Song, translated “Leinster’s,” more probably belongs to Lambay, the Λιμνίος of Ptolemy, supporting his argument also by a geographical consideration.—He next proceeded to the estuaries—*Jöllduhlau*p, supposed to be Lough Swilly; and *Úlfreksfjörðr*, or *Úlfhelsfjörðr*, supposed to be either Lough Foyle or Carlingford Bay, but perhaps an English locality, and, if so, that arm of Morecambe Bay which runs up to Ulverstone.—The town *Dýflin* he stated to be evidently a Norse adaptation of the Irish name of *Dublin*; *Veðrafjörðr*, or Waterford, to be undoubtedly Norse, adducing its various derivations, and giving the preference to *veðr* “weather,” and *fjörðr* “bay;” and *Hlimrék*, or Limerick, to be probably a Norse adaptation of the Irish name *Laimneach*,—notwithstanding its consisting of two Norse words, meaning “branch” and “district,” and the resemblance between the Lower Shannon and the *Limfiord*, or “branching bay,” in Denmark. *Kunnjáttaborg*, or *Kantaraborg*, given in the *Antiquitates Celto-Scandinicæ* as *Kunnaktirborg*, and (in the genitive form) *Kantaraborgar*—the place of Brian Boru’s nuptials with Kormlöda, or Gorm-

liath—he concluded to be *Cancora*; and then adverted to the minor localities of *Iniskillen* (perhaps *Inisclothran*, in Lough Ree), *Themar* (Tara), and *Glendelaga* (Glendalough).

The name *Smerwick*, laid down as *Smjörvik* on the map, but left unexplained in the essay, was traced by the author to two sources. The first derivation—from *smjör* “butter,” and *vik* “bay,” or “town”—was supported by the frequency of the former word as an element of Norse local nomenclature, and the probability that some trade in butter was carried on between the Northmen and the south-western Irish. A curious tradition, connected with the fortunes of Leif, the son of Hrodmarr, was adduced, in which the name *mynn-thak* occurs—that is, meal and butter blended together—a word apparently identical with the Irish *móin-teac* “boggy,” and somehow connected with the discovery of butter, or an adipocere resembling it, in the Irish bogs. The second derivation was founded on a tradition current in Munster, that *Smerwick* is a contraction of *St. Mary's Wick*; and a tradition from Olave Tryggvason's Saga was adduced, showing the probability that, if it be so, the name is due to him.

*Kaupmannaey*, laid down on the map at the entrance of Belfast Lough, and also left unexplained in the essay, was shown to be Copeland Island.

Mr. Downes prefaced the latter part of his subject by briefly adverting to the principal countries, in which the Northmen have left topographical traces of their invasions—namely, Normandy, Eastland (extending from Mecklenburgh to the White Sea), and the British Islands—alluding to various classes of Norse names occurring in Normandy, a few solitary instances in Eastland, and dwelling at some length on those found in Ireland. A minute analysis of the Irish localities, ending in *ford*, was closed by the inference, that as *Odin's Ford*, in the county of Carlow, is certainly a Norse locality, so *Urlingford*, *Freshford*, and *Erke*, in the adjacent county of Kilkenny, are Norse likewise. A less minute ana-





lysis was undertaken with several similar names ; after which the author proceeded to a rapid scrutiny of names of baronies, townlands, and towns—noticing in particular, as wholly or partly of Norse derivation, *Rathgorman*, *Slaghtmanus*, and *Ballyvedra, alias Weatherstown*, near Waterford.—The last class of Irish names analysed was that of islands. Several instances were adduced of insular localities derivable from some one of the three Norse words for island—*ey*, *holm*, and *kalfr*—the distinctive meanings of which were explained. The name of a locality, in particular, off the south coast of Iceland, called “ Irishman’s Islands,” was explained from the sequel of the tradition of Leif, before cited.

The author closed his paper by recommending to the antiquary some attention to the neglected literature of the North, as a means not only of accumulating information, but of correcting error ; and concluded by adducing the following examples of error, corrected by a comparison of specimens found in different countries :—“ ‘ The short sword, or dagger,’ with which King, in his account of Richborough, has equipped a Roman bagpiper, would still maintain its belligerent masquerade, had not the discovery of a more perfect specimen in Scandinavia proved it to be the more appropriate appendage of a pipe ; and certain figures, published by Pennant, which were deified in Sweden, might have long enjoyed their sanctity, had not the subsequent discovery of more perfect specimens in Denmark desecrated them into—knife-handles.”

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Dr. Anster, on the part of Dr. Luby, F.T.C.D., read a letter of the late Rev. Charles Wolfe, author of the lines on the burial of Sir John Moore. The letter, or rather fragment of a letter, had been found by Dr. Luby among the papers of a deceased brother, who was a college friend of Wolfe and of Mr. Taylor, to whom the letter was addressed.